Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application.

Listing of Claims:

1-43. (Canceled)

44. (Previously Presented) A method of forming a lesion in a left atrium of a patient, comprising the steps of:

introducing a circumferential ablation device including an expandable member and a circumferential ablation element into the left atrium;

expanding the expandable member;

engaging a circumferential region of tissue at a location where a pulmonary vein extends from the left atrium with the circumferential ablation device; and

ablating the circumferential region of tissue with the circumferential ablation element.

45. (Previously Presented) A method as claimed in claim 44, wherein the step of introducing a circumferential ablation device comprises introducing a circumferential ablation device including a collapsible/expandable hoop and a circumferential ablation element.

46. (Previously Presented) A method as claimed in claim 44, wherein the step of introducing a circumferential ablation device comprises introducing a circumferential ablation device including a collapsible/expandable hoop and a continuous conductive region on the hoop.

47. (Previously Presented) A method as claimed in claim 44, wherein the step of introducing a circumferential ablation device comprises introducing a circumferential ablation device including a collapsible/expandable hoop and a plurality of spaced conductive regions on the hoop.

48. (Previously Presented) A method as claimed in claim 44, wherein the step of engaging a circumferential region of tissue comprises encircling the pulmonary vein with the expandable member.

49. (Previously Presented) A method as claimed in claim 44, wherein the step of ablating the circumferential region of tissue comprises transmitting energy into the tissue.

50. (Canceled)

51. (Currently Amended) ~~The method of claim 50~~ A method as claimed in claim 44, wherein ~~the left~~ a left atrial arrhythmia originates at least in part from an arrhythmogenic origin located along the pulmonary vein, and ~~further comprising ablating~~ the circumferential region of tissue ~~at the location which~~ is between the arrhythmogenic origin and the left atrium. ~~, such that the left atrium is electrically isolated from the arrhythmogenic origin.~~

52. (Currently Amended) ~~The method of claim 50, further comprising:~~ A method as claimed in claim 44, wherein the step of ~~forming a circumferential lesion by~~ ablating the circumferential region of tissue ~~such that the~~ results in the formation of a circumferential lesion ~~has a lesion width and also~~ having a lesion circumference ~~,~~ ~~wherein the~~ and a lesion width that is less than two-thirds the lesion circumference.

53. (Currently Amended) ~~The method of claim 50, further comprising ablating~~ A method as claimed in claim 44, wherein the circumferential region of tissue ~~at the location which~~ includes the pulmonary vein ostium.

54. (Currently Amended) ~~The method of claim 50, further comprising engaging the expandable member with the circumferential region of tissue by:~~ A method as claimed in claim 44 wherein

the step of introducing a circumferential ablation device comprises introducing a circumferential ablation device with the expandable member in ~~expanding the expandable member from~~ a radially collapsed position, and ~~to a radially expanded position while the expandable member is positioned within the left atrium; and~~

the step of engaging a circumferential region of tissue comprises advancing the expandable member when ~~in the~~ in a radially expanded position toward the pulmonary vein until the expandable member engages the pulmonary vein wall.

55. (Currently Amended) ~~The method of claim 50~~ A method as claimed in claim 44, further comprising the step of:

allowing antegrade blood flow to perfuse from the pulmonary vein and into the left atrium ~~through the location when~~ while engaging ~~the expandable member with~~ the circumferential region of tissue and also while ablating the circumferential region of tissue with the circumferential ablation element.

56. (Currently Amended) ~~The method of claim 50~~ A method as claimed in claim 44, further comprising the step of:

ablating an elongate region of tissue located along a left atrial wall of the left atrium with a linear lesion ablation element provided along a linear lesion ablation member.

57. (Currently Amended) ~~The method of claim 50~~ A method as claimed in claim 44, wherein

the expandable member comprises an outer surface and the circumferential ablation element is located at least in part along the outer surface, ~~and further comprising:~~

~~contacting at least a portion of~~ the step of engaging a circumferential region of tissue comprises engaging a circumferential region of tissue with the ablation element when the expandable member is ~~expanded;~~ expanded, and

the step of ablating the circumferential region of tissue with the circumferential ablation element comprises ablating the circumferential region of tissue while the circumferential ablation element is in contact with at least the portion of the circumferential region of tissue.

58. (Currently Amended) ~~The method of claim 50~~ A method as claimed in claim 44, wherein

the ablation element comprises a cryogenic ablation element, and ~~further comprising:~~

the step of ablating the circumferential region of tissue ~~at least in part by~~ comprises activating the cryogenic ablation element to cool the circumferential region of tissue.

59. (Currently Amended) ~~The method of claim 50~~ A method as claimed in claim 44, wherein

the ablation element comprises a fluid delivery ablation element, and ~~further comprising:~~

the step of ablating the circumferential region of tissue ~~at least in part by~~ comprises exposing an ablative fluid from the fluid delivery element to the circumferential region of tissue.

60. (Currently Amended) ~~The method of claim 50~~ A method as claimed in claim 44, wherein

the ablation element comprises a microwave ablation element, and ~~further comprising:~~

the step of ablating the circumferential region of tissue ~~at least in part by~~ comprises inductively coupling the microwave ablation element with the circumferential region of tissue.

61. (Currently Amended) ~~The method of claim 50~~ A method as claimed in claim 44, wherein

the ablation element comprises an optical ablation element, and ~~further comprising:~~

the step of ablating the circumferential region of tissue ~~at least in part by~~ comprises optically coupling the optical ablation element with the circumferential region of tissue.

62. (New) A method for treating atrial arrhythmia in a patient, comprising:

positioning a tissue ablation device adjacent to a circumferential region of tissue associated with an orifice of a vein that carries blood from the body or lungs to an atrium; and

forming a circumferential conduction block in the circumferential region of tissue with the tissue ablation device.

63. (New) A method as claimed in claim 62, wherein the step of positioning a tissue ablation device comprises positioning a tissue ablation device having a shape corresponding to the orifice.

64. (New) A method as claimed in claim 63, wherein the step of positioning a tissue ablation device comprises positioning a tissue ablation device adjacent to one of a superior vena cava, an inferior vena cava and a pulmonary vein.

65. (New) A method as claimed in claim 62, wherein the step of positioning a tissue ablation device comprises collapsing the tissue ablation device, inserting the tissue ablation device into the heart, and expanding the tissue ablation device after the tissue ablation device is within the heart.

66. (New) A method as claimed in claim 62, wherein the step of positioning a tissue ablation device comprises positioning a bendable loop structure that supports at least one tissue ablation element.

67. (New) A method as claimed in claim 62, wherein the step of positioning a tissue ablation device comprises positioning an annular structure that supports at least one tissue ablation element.

68. (New) A method as claimed in claim 62, wherein the step of positioning a tissue ablation device comprises positioning the tissue ablation device such that it encircles the orifice.

69. (New) A method as claimed in claim 62, wherein the step of forming a conduction block comprises forming a continuous conduction block.

70. (New) A method as claimed in claim 62, wherein the step of forming a conduction block comprises applying ablating energy to the tissue.

71. (New) A method as claimed in claim 62, wherein the step of forming a conduction block comprises applying electromagnetic ablating energy to the tissue.